

From: "Jennifer J. Freyd" <jjf@uoregon.edu>  
Subject: survey generalizability  
Date: June 5, 2015 at 20:52:56 PDT  
To: Hal Sadofsky <sadofsky@uoregon.edu>  
Cc: "John E. Bonine 2" <jbonine@uoregon.edu>

Dear Hal,

John Bonine told me a bit about his exchange with you regarding the campus survey data my lab collected last summer. I wanted to chime in on the issue of generalizability and the possible contamination due to self-selection. This is a topic about which I am passionate (see attached article).

You are absolutely right that generalizability is an important concern. When considering a response rate less than 100% one has to ask what drove some people to participate and others not. If those factors might co-vary with what is being measured, then this is a compromise to the generalizability of the research. The issue is not really the response rate per se but the possibility of selection bias. In the case of our survey we cannot be sure about all the factors that drove the decision. One factor for sure is simply reading and opening email sent to a uoregon.edu address during the summer. Another factor is likely a response to the announced subject matter (and this is as likely to work against inflated victimization rates as it is to inflate them given the reluctance most victims have to disclose victimization). A primary factor is very likely related to the incentive we offered – a \$20.00 gift card to Amazon. In fact, I refused to do the survey without offering participants the financial incentive (which required I raise funds), as I felt it was absolutely necessary for the integrity of the study exactly for sample generalizability.

Still, you are right that we cannot be sure from the one study.

Fortunately we have a vast amount of other data for comparison. There are numerous national samples with similar survey questions. In addition we have been collecting data at the UO for 20 years on sexual victimization and while we never before set out to estimate rates at the UO per se, we over the years collected much relevant data using the

same or similar measures using a participant population that is not vulnerable to self-selection based on interest in the topic (about this I'll return). Nothing in our 2014 survey was inconsistent with either national samples or our local samples.

The standard student sample we used in my lab is based on the psychology department's human subject pool (HSP). We have worked hard over many years to make sure this sample is not contaminated by self-selection based on awareness of the study topic. I hope you will take a look at the attached commentary (A Plea to University Researchers) I wrote about this important methodological issue – you will see I'm passionate about getting this piece of methodology done right – and you will see that the UO does a better job on this front than most other universities.

Of course the HSP is self-selected in another way – it is based on students who take introductory psychology. According to the Registrar about 40% of UO undergrads take our intro courses and thus are in our pool at one point or another. It is conceivable that people who take introductory psychology are more or less likely to be victimized while a student at the UO than students who do not take introductory psychology but I would be very surprised if this was a big effect – and thus I believe our HSP data are in many ways more solid than those from a campus survey in which we cannot entirely rule out self-selection that contaminates generalizability. The campus survey data we collected are generally quite consistent with what we have seen from our HSP data over many years. However, we don't have the exact comparison and thus (thanks to thinking about your exchange with John) in the fall we plan to compare directly the HSP victimization rate with the campus survey rate using the same questions. I'll keep you posted on what we find.

One final thought: even if we had rampant self-selection in only one direction such that the 80% of students who did not complete our survey had zero victimization while 20% of the 20% who did complete the survey experienced rape or attempted rape at the UO, this would

still be unacceptable. In John's extrapolation calculus this would mean that rather than 20 new victims each week, the UO has 4 new victims. Presumably no one wants 4 new victims of rape or attempted rape on our campus each week.

There is much more information about our 2014 survey here:

<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/campus/index.html>

Jennifer

Jennifer J. Freyd  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, OR 97403-1227  
<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/>

From: Hal Sadofsky <sadofsky@uoregon.edu>  
Subject: Re: survey generalizability  
Date: June 5, 2015 at 22:40:01 PDT  
To: "Jennifer J. Freyd" <jjf@uoregon.edu>  
Cc: "John E. Bonine 2" <jbonine@uoregon.edu>

Dear Jennifer,

Yes, my main point to John was that the significant possibility of sample bias meant that generalizing your sample to the entire UO population is speculative. I'm sure you agree with that; as an esteemed colleague of mine writes: "the most pernicious threat to external validity in participant selection occurs through self-selection, which can occur outside the researcher's awareness." She then goes on to write "This means, for instance, that individuals who respond to a research advertisement asking for people who have experienced a traumatic event (or abuse, etc.) may constitute an atypical sample compared to the general population of trauma survivors."

Your final point below I absolutely agree with and is one that echoes what I wrote to John in my first email. I wrote "In some sense it isn't important: this is a real problem and we need to take real steps to improve it. But the steps taken to make improvements do actually depend on the details to some extent."

yours, Hal

On Jun 5, 2015, at 8:52 PM, Jennifer J. Freyd <jjf@uoregon.edu> wrote:

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University of Oregon  
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<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/>

<Freyd 2012 A Plea to Researchers.pdf>

From: Jennifer Freyd <jjf@uoregon.edu>  
Subject: CASBS press release  
Date: March 5, 2018 at 07:38:00 PST  
To: "(W.) Andrew Marcus" <marcus@uoregon.edu>, Hal Sadofsky  
<sadofsky@uoregon.edu>, Ulrich Mayr <mayr@uoregon.edu>

Dear Andrew and Hal,

Thank you again for your support of my upcoming CASBS fellowship. I thought you might want to see this notice from CASBS regarding the fellows selected for next year. It specifically mentions the sexual violence project.

<https://casbs.stanford.edu/casbs-announces-2018-19-fellows>

With appreciation,  
Jennifer

PS Hal, I keep forgetting to alert you to a new publication from my lab that directly assesses the role of self-selection in campus victimization estimates based on climate surveys. (You may remember we discussed this a few years ago.) My team took advantage of how well the UO psychology department structures its own human subject pool in order to get a sample in which self-selection is greatly reduced and we were thus able to compare estimates of victimization rates.

<http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/dignity/vol3/iss1/7/>

From: Hal Sadofsky <sadofsky@uoregon.edu>  
Subject: Re: CASBS press release  
Date: March 5, 2018 at 08:47:06 PST  
To: Jennifer Freyd <jjf@uoregon.edu>  
Cc: "(W.) Andrew Marcus" <marcus@uoregon.edu>, Ulrich Mayr <mayr@uoregon.edu>

Dear Jennifer,

Thanks for the press release, and also thanks for the link to the article. I look forward to trying to understand it (since it is mostly about data collection and analysis, I may be \_able\_ to understand it)!

yours, Hal

On Mar 5, 2018, at 7:38 AM, Jennifer Freyd <jjf@uoregon.edu> wrote:

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